

normal pressure, and that under such conditions the Si surface tends to be rough. In order to prevent formation of rough surfaces, annealing is continued while the chamber 100 is evacuated using the extraction pump 300 as shown in Fig. 1.

IN THE ABSTRACT:

Please amend the Abstract in “clean” format, as follows:

A laser annealing apparatus is provided in which laser light is irradiated onto an amorphous semiconductor layer placed inside an annealing chamber through a chamber window, thereby poly-crystallizing the amorphous semiconductor film. Inside the annealing chamber a low degree vacuum (about 1.3×10^3 Pa to about 1.3 Pa) is maintained at a room temperature. An inert gas such as nitrogen, hydrogen, or argon is introduced into the atmosphere while maintaining the low degree vacuum. As a result, the surface smoothness of the polycrystalline semiconductor layer is comparable to that resulting from high degree vacuum annealing, while, unlike high degree vacuum annealing, there is less contamination of the chamber window and productivity is improved.